

Adult Literacy Contact Centre NEWSLETTER



February 1995

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A project of the Adult Basic Education Association of B.C.

ALCC AND LITERACY B.C. TO JOIN FORCES

The Adult Literacy Contact Centre and Literacy B.C. will merge to form a new provincial literacy organization later this year.

The ALCC has operated as a project of the ABEABC under the B.C. literacy cost-shared program since 1987. Literacy B.C. was founded as a society in 1990.

The decision to merge the two organizations was made at a meeting in September 1994 of representatives of Literacy B.C., the Adult Basic Education Association of B.C. (which sponsors the ALCC), and the ALCC Steering Committee. The decision was subsequently ratified by the Literacy B.C. and ABEABC Boards. The merger was also approved by the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour and the National Literacy Secretariat.

The merger was initiated primarily to resolve public confusion about similarities between the two organizations and some duplication of services.

Betty Nobel, Chair of the ALCC Steering Committee, says, "The decision to merge these two fine organizations was taken thoughtfully,

and the services that are provided now will continue. Finding adequate resources will be a challenge and developing an identity for the new organization will take time, but we have nothing to lose and everything to gain. A united organization for literacy in B.C. will be even more effective."

The new organization will reflect a vision of literacy service to learners, practitioners, and the general public that was developed at the meeting in September 1994. The vision is based on the following:

- ❖ **Access:** 1-800 number; database; research function; resource centre
- ❖ **Advocacy:** public awareness; fundraising; support for learners
- ❖ **Development:** professional development; practitioner training; regional development; learner networking; democratic membership.

A consultant has been hired to facilitate the merger under the direction of a committee composed of representatives of both organizations. The merger is expected to take effect by or before September 1995. □

New Literacy Coordinator for B.C.

The Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour (MSTL) has appointed a new Coordinator of Adult Literacy Programs.

Audrey Thomas began work as Coordinator on November 21, 1994. She succeeds Mary Waddington, who will return to the Basic Education Department at Vancouver Community College after a year's sabbatical.

The role of the Coordinator is to coordinate the overall direction, development, delivery and evaluation of adult literacy programs and resources in B.C. The Coordinator also manages the funding of the \$1.3 million literacy projects cost-shared between the MSTL and the National Literacy Secretariat.

Thomas has a long and distinguished career in adult literacy. She is well known in Canada for her contributions to the field as a researcher, writer, policy analyst, and advocate.

Since 1980, when she moved to B.C., Thomas has been a freelance adult education and literacy consultant to government and non-profit agencies, specializing in research, project design, policy development and training.

Thomas has participated in the development of many literacy

organizations. She was instrumental in the creation of the Movement for Canadian Literacy in 1977 as MCL's founding executive director. More recently, in B.C., she was involved in the creation of Project Literacy Victoria in 1988 and of Literacy B.C. in 1990. She has been a member of the Board of all three organizations and was President of Literacy B.C. from 1993-1994.

Thomas's other Board appointments have included Frontier College, the Canadian Association of Adult Education, and Literacy Volunteers of America, among others. In addition, she was appointed to the B.C. Provincial Literacy Advisory Committee in 1988. She subsequently became the researcher for the committee and wrote the committee report *Opening the doors to lifelong learning: Empowering undereducated adults* (1989).

Thomas is the author of numerous other publications on adult literacy in Canada. Among her most recent works are: *The reluctant learner: A research report on the reasons for non-participation and dropout in literacy programs in British Columbia* (1990); *Opening minds behind closed doors: Literacy in B.C. corrections* (1992); and, with Martin Buck, *Analysis of integrated learning systems and their use in adult basic education programs in British*

Columbia (1994).

Thomas notes that 1995 is the mid-point of the decade, and says, "Since International Literacy Year in 1990 there has been a greater emphasis on workforce skills, new information and communication technologies, and family literacy initiatives. These trends indicate that lifelong learning is being embraced in principle and in practice. Literacy is more important than ever, both as a foundation skill and an overarching principle as we head into the 21st century. We must work to ensure that the next five years can make a difference."

Audrey Thomas, Coordinator
Adult Literacy Programs
Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour
Urban Colleges, Developmental and Business Programs
Post-Secondary Education Division
838 Fort Street
Victoria, B.C.
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Phone: 387-6174
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Remember,
anyone can get
literacy information
by looking under
LEARN in the
Yellow Pages™

Provincial Literacy Resource Centre

A feasibility study is now underway to develop a model for a provincial literacy resource centre in B.C. that will collect and distribute adult literacy materials.

The study is funded by the 1994/95 B.C. literacy cost-shared program and sponsored by the Open Learning Agency. Bancroft Planning & Research Associates has been hired to conduct the study under the direction of the project advisory committee: Laurie Gould, Literacy Materials Committee; Linda Hackett, Adult Literacy Contact Centre; Linda Mitchell, Literacy B.C.; and Thomas Quigley, B.C. Library Association.

The purpose of the study is to: identify the current providers of literacy materials, curricula and research in the province; define the need for a Provincial Literacy Resource Centre to support these activities; and develop a model of and recommendations for the proposed centre.

The study was undertaken in response to a perceived need for a centralized service to collect and house literacy materials and to handle the many enquiries

about these materials received by existing organizations. The study will also address issues such as the need to examine materials for their suitability to literacy instruction.

The study is currently in the first phase of data collection. As part of the research, selected individuals and organizations in the literacy field will be contacted through telephone interviews or written questionnaires. □

Literacy Award

The Canadian Library Trustees Association (CLTA) has issued a call for nominations for its Achievement in Literacy Award. The award is presented annually to a public library board that has initiated an innovative program that is contributing significantly to the advancement of literacy in its community.

Any public library board in Canada is eligible for the award. Nominations must be sponsored by at least two individuals and received by March 1, 1995.

For further information, contact:

Brenda Shields
Member Services
Canadian Library Association
602 - 200 Elgin Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K2P 1L5
Phone: (613) 232-9625, Ext. 318
Fax: (613) 563-9895 □

Job Opportunity

The B.C. Workforce Training Consortium is seeking an individual with strong management and communication skills for a ten month assignment as a Workforce/Workplace Literacy Consultant. The Consortium consists of the B.C. Chamber of Commerce, the B.C. Construction Industry Skills Improvement Council (SkillPlan), Literacy B.C., and the Open Learning Agency.

The Consultant will be responsible for assisting in promotional presentations and consultations with businesses in setting up workforce/workplace literacy training programs.

Applicants should have at least an undergraduate degree, experience in workplace education or training, a background in literacy and/or Adult Basic Education, and a strong business/labour orientation. Computer skills in word processing and databases will be a definite asset.

Resumes should be submitted by February 24 to:

Literacy B.C.
1122 - 510 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V6B 1L8
Fax: 687-5076

Literacy Collection for Northwestern B.C.

A literacy collection emphasizing materials with native, rural, and northern themes is now available to residents of northwestern B.C.

The collection is the product of a B.C. literacy cost-shared project. The project, first funded in 1991 and again in 1993, was sponsored by Northwest Community College.

The collection of over 4,000 materials is housed at the Learning Resource Centre of Northwest Community College in Terrace. It includes print materials, audiotapes, videotapes, and class sets of training materials. The materials can be grouped into kits on themes such as: organization, planning and philosophy; fundraising; family literacy; workplace literacy; spelling; and math literacy, among others.

Learners, instructors, tutors and tutor trainers in northwestern B.C. may borrow individual items or kits free of charge. An on-line catalogue of the collection can be accessed from public terminals at the Learning Resource Centres of all nine Northwest Community College

campuses and at public libraries throughout the region. Those with a computer and modem can also access the catalogue from their homes.

For further information, contact:

Patti Barnes, Coordinator
Learning Resource Centre
Northwest Community College
5331 McConnell Avenue
Terrace, B.C.
V8G 4C2

Phone: 635-6511
Fax: 635-1594 ☐

Issues in Aboriginal Literacy

Proposals for conference papers and workshop topics are invited for an Aboriginal literacy training event to be held in Kelowna, June 8-11, 1995.

"Affirming Our Voice: Issues in Aboriginal Literacy" is co-sponsored by the K'noowenchoot Centre for Aboriginal Adult Education Resources of Okanagan University College in Salmon Arm and the Prince George Native Friendship Centre. The event will address a wide spectrum of issues relevant to Aboriginal literacy in North America, in both Native languages and English.

Proposals are invited on the following themes:

- ❖ Community immersion
- ❖ Curriculum development

- ❖ Aboriginal culture and literacy
- ❖ Technology to enhance literacy
- ❖ Aboriginal post-secondary programs

Proposals should be submitted by February 28 to:

Lyle W. Frank
Conference Coordinator
K'noowenchoot Centre
Okanagan University College
P.O. Box 610
Salmon Arm, B.C.
V1E 4N7

Phone: (604) 832-3221
or 1-800-665-9972
Fax: (604) 832-2771 ☐

Adult Literacy Contact Centre Newsletter

622 - 510 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1L8
1-800-663-1293 Toll-free in B.C.
684-0624 Lower Mainland
684-8520 Fax

The Adult Literacy Contact Centre is a project of the Adult Basic Education Association of B.C. and is jointly funded by the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour; and the National Literacy Secretariat.

The Centre welcomes receiving your literacy news by phone, fax or mail. We reserve the right to edit written submissions for the newsletter.

The newsletter is published bi-monthly (except as noted). It is available free of charge to any individual or agency upon request.



NEW RESOURCES

News for New Readers: A Guide to Producing a Community Newspaper Literacy Section

This "how-to" guide is the product of a pilot project which provided local news in plain language to newspaper readers in B.C.'s Elk Valley.

The project was funded by the 1992/93 B.C. literacy cost-shared program and sponsored by East Kootenay Community College.

Access News was a half-page literacy section published once a week for ten months in the *Elk Valley Miner* in Fernie, B.C. According to the guide, *Access News* was the first literacy section of its type to provide local news in plain language for new adult readers on a regular basis in a community newspaper in B.C.

The 59-page guide describes in detail how *Access News* was produced and includes advice on topics such as: how to form a successful partnership with a community newspaper; obtaining sponsorships; planning and promoting the project; and writing in plain language. The guide also includes 12 actual size samples of *Access News*.

Copies of the guide are available from the Adult Literacy Contact Centre.
Phone: 1-800-663-1293.

Reading Mothers Raising Families - A Family Literacy Workshop Series

This 200-page publication includes the lesson plans for a series of 20 workshops offered to mothers with low-level literacy skills in Fernie, B.C. The project was funded by the 1993/94 B.C. literacy cost-shared program and sponsored by East Kootenay Community College.

The workshops were designed to help the 16 women who participated improve their literacy skills and their home and family management skills. The topics covered include: communication with your partner - conflict resolution; helping your children succeed in school; anger management; the value of play; and issues of single parents.

Copies are available from the Adult Literacy Contact Centre.
Phone: 1-800-663-1293.

Deafness and Learning with Karen Taylor

The unique characteristics of people with hearing loss, and the ways in which they can be assisted to fulfill their potential as students and employees, are demonstrated in a new resource kit.

Deafness and Learning with Karen Taylor is a series of six captioned videos and sets of print materials dealing with different aspects of hearing loss and learning. Production of the kit was funded by the 1993/94 B.C. literacy cost-shared program.

The kit was written and produced by Karen Taylor who has had a hearing loss since birth. Taylor is the Coordinator of the Resources in Education for the Adult Deaf (R.E.A.D. 2000), a program of the Sooke School District which assists those with a hearing loss to complete their education.

The kit is designed, says Taylor, "to help educate people in a position of authority who are making decisions that impact on the lives of deaf people...and to help deaf and hard of hearing people understand their own issues a little better."

The kit can be purchased as a whole or in separate units.

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To order the kit, contact:

Continuing Education
School District #62 (Sooke)
3143 Jacklin Road
Victoria B.C.
V9B 5R1

Phone: 474-9801
TTY: 474-1165
Fax: 474-9825

Literacy Portfolio Assessment: A Resource for Literacy Workers

This resource binder is the product of a National Literacy Secretariat community project. Approximately 50 literacy instructors in six different regions of the country were interviewed for their opinions about learner assessment,

program evaluation, and the potential uses of literacy portfolios in literacy development.

The publication was written by Maurice Taylor, Partnerships in Learning, University of Ottawa.

A literacy portfolio is defined as "a purposeful collection of a learner's work that tells a story of the efforts, progress or achievement in a given area." A learner's portfolio might include samples of work gathered over time, reading profiles, progress reports, teacher's comments, self-evaluation notes, and so on.

It might also include examples of literacy practices outside the classroom, such as copies of drivers' licenses, pages of

books that parents read to children, letters written to friends and family, and examples of reading and writing done in the community or on the job.

Taylor divides the development of a literacy portfolio into "getting started," to determine how an instructor "fits into" the approach; and the mechanics of it--how portfolio assessment is used at different stages of a program. From there, he describes and provides sample formats for three phases of portfolio assessment, which includes procedures that can be used by both learners and instructors.

Photocopies of the binder are available upon request from the Adult Literacy Contact Centre. Phone: 1-800-663-1293. □

Showcase of B.C. Literacy Cost-Shared Products

Adult literacy cost-shared projects in B.C. will be showcased in a special event in Vancouver this month.

The Showcase Event will feature displays and presentations by literacy projects funded since 1989 through a cost-shared agreement between the National Literacy Secretariat, Human Resources Development Canada, and the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour.

The public is invited to attend the Showcase Event at:

**The Holiday Inn
1110 Howe Street
Vancouver**

**on
Friday, February 24
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

There will be four presentations during the day by participants in cost-shared projects on the themes of: needs assessments in Native communities; literacy lifeskills enhancement; deafness and

learning; and family literacy.

The products of many cost-shared projects will also be on display. Some of these resources will be available to the public.

Registration begins at 9:00 a.m. and there will be a \$10.00 registration fee at the door.

If you are planning to attend, please RSVP to the Adult Literacy Contact Centre by February 20. Phone: 1-800-663-1293.